

Mexico Bilateral Brief

India and Mexico have warm and cordial bilateral relations as well as contacts going back to centuries and commonality of views on a wide range of issues. Both countries have striking similarities in geo-climatic conditions, biodiversity, physiognomy and people, cultural and family values. India and Mexico are both heirs of great civilizations and have European connections from their colonial era.

Historical Background

Mexico was one of the first countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to establish diplomatic relations with Independent India in 1950. During the period of Cold War, Mexico and India worked together closely as members of the UN, G-77, G-15 and G-6 (nuclear disarmament), and actively championed the interests of developing countries such as in the Uruguay Round of Multilateral Trade Negotiations. Till the mid- eighties, the two countries exchanged as many as eight visits at the level of Head of State and Government, which epitomised the closeness of the bilateral ties. Bilateral interactions regained momentum with the exchange of highest level visits of President Felipe Calderon in September 2007 and President Pratibha Patil in April 2008. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh attended the G20 Summit in Los Cabos in Mexico in June 2012 and also had fruitful bilateral discussions with President Calderon.

Currently, the two countries share an active, diversified, and expanding bilateral relationship. During the visit of former President Calderon in 2007, the bilateral relations were upgraded to a “Privileged Partnership”. President Enrique Peña Nieto met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of G-20 Meeting at Brisbane in December 2014 and the UNGA in New York in September 2015. Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a visit to Mexico City on 8 June 2016 and held meetings with President Enrique Peña Nieto. They met again on the sidelines of G-20 meeting at Hamburg in July 2017. President Pena Nieto had accepted an invitation to visit India in December 2017 which could not happen ultimately due to the earthquake which struck Mexico in September 2017.

Ms. Rocio Nahle, Minister of Energy of Mexico visited India to participate in the inauguration of Petrotech 2019 on 10 February 2019. Mr. Marcelo Ebrard, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico met former EAM on the sidelines of the G20 in Japan in June 2019, when he expressed his desire to visit India.

Foreign Office Consultations (FOCs) and Joint Commission Meeting (JCM) are the major bilateral dialogue mechanisms. The 5th round of Foreign Office Consultations between India and Mexico were held in New Delhi on 7th October 2019. The Indian side was led by Ms. Vijay Thakur Singh, Secretary (East). The Mexican side was led by Amb. Julián Ventura Valero, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico. They reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral cooperation, including political, trade and economic cooperation as well as agriculture, science and technology, energy, tourism and culture. Both sides underscored the need to hold regular dialogue in these areas through the established bilateral mechanisms. They agreed to continue the work on a roadmap towards a strategic partnership, as agreed upon during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Mexico in 2016. They also exchanged views on regional and international issues including cooperation in the United Nations and G20 and agreed to work closely with each other on multilateral issues of interest noting that both countries are

candidates for the non-permanent seat of the United Nations Security Council for the period 2021-2022.

The 4th FOC and 7th JCM were held in June 2017 in Mexico City where both sides reiterated their commitment to intensify the high-level political dialogue, parliamentary and other exchanges between the two countries. Joint Working Group meetings on Tourism and Agriculture were held on the sidelines of the JCM on 20 October 2014. The 4th High Level Group (HLG) on Trade, Investment and Economic Cooperation met in July 2016. The 6th Meeting of Indo-Mexican Joint Committee on Science and Technology was held in Mexico City in July 2016. These interactions have further advanced bilateral relations in various sectors: political, multilateral, economic, and cultural, etc.

Visits

Regular high-level visits have provided a sustained impetus to our growing bilateral partnership.

Incoming visits		Outgoing visits	
Dignitary	Year	Dignitary	Year
President Adolfo Lopez Mateos	1962	Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru	1961
President Luis Echeverria Álvarez	1975	Prime Minister Smt. Indira Gandhi	1981
President Jose Lopez Portillo	1981	President Shri Giani Zail Singh	1984
President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado	1985	Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi	1986
President Felipe de Jesús Calderón Hinojosa	2007	President Smt. Pratibha Devisingh Patil	2008
		Prime Minister Shri Manmohan Singh	June 2012
		Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi	June 2016

(Other recent important visits from India)

- Shri M.A.A. Fatmi, MOS for Human Resource Development (February 2006)
- Shri Mahabir Prasad, Minister for Small Scale Industries & Agro and Rural Industries (March 2006)
- Shri Kapil Sibal, Minister for Science & Technology and Ocean Development (June 2006)

- Shri Anand Sharma, MOS for External Affairs (December 2006)
- Km. Selja, Minister for Housing & Urban Development (October 2007)
- Dr. Anbumani Ramadoss (August 2008)
- Shri Mani Shankar Aiyar, Minister for Panchayati Raj and Development of the North Eastern Region (November 2008)
- Shri Murli Deora, Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas (March 2010)
- Shri Sharad Pawar, Minister of Agriculture, Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution (September 2010)
- Smt. Meira Kumar, Lok Sabha Speaker, along with a Parliamentary delegation (April 2011)
- Shri Anand Sharma, Commerce and Industry Minister (April 2012)
- Shri P. Chidambaram, Finance Minister (November 2012)
- Shri Ajay Maken, Minister of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (February 2013)
- Dr. (Smt.) D. Purandeswari, Minister of State for Commerce & Industry (April 2013)
- Shri Santosh Gangwar, Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Textiles and River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (October 2014)
- Shri Dharmendra Pradhan MOS(I/C) for P&NG (May 2015)
- (Retd.) Gen. Shri V.K Singh, MOS(EA) (November 2016)
- Shri Kiren Rijiju, MoS for Home Affairs(May 2017)

Other recent important visits from Mexico

- Dr. Luis Ernesto Derbez, Economy Minister (May 2002)
- Mr. Victor Lichtinger Waisman, Environment Minister (October 2002)
- Dr. Gil Diaz, Finance Minister (November 2002)
- Dr. Jorge Castaneda, Foreign Minister (November 2002)
- Dr. Luis Ernesto Derbez, Foreign Minister (August 2004)
- Mr. Eduardo Sojo Garza-Aldape, Economy Minister (May 2007)
- Ms. Gloria Guevara, Tourism Minister (August 2010)
- Ms. Juan Rafael Elvira Quesada, Environment Minister (February 2011)
- Ms. Patricia Espinosa Cantellano, Foreign Minister (August 2010 and February 2012)
- Vice Foreign Minister Carlos de Icaza (6-7 March 2014, for 3rd Round of FOC)
- Mr Jose Antonio Meade Kuribreña, Foreign Minister (October 2014, for JCM)
- Mr. Juan José Guerra Abud, Minister of Environment & Natural Resources (February 2015)
- Ms Claudia Ruiz Massieu, Foreign Minister (March 2016)
- Parliamentary delegation headed by Senator Teofilo Torres Corzo (March 2016)
- President of the Asia-Pacific Commission on Foreign Relations (March 2017)
- Ms Maria Guadalupe Murguia Gutierrez, President of the Chamber of Deputies, (August 2017)
- Mexican Senator and President, IPU Ms. Gabriela Cuevas Barrón (December 2018)
- Ms. Rocio Nahle, Minister of Energy of Mexico (February 2019)

- Mr. Julian Ventura, Vice-Minister of Ministry of Foreign Affairs (January 2020) for Raisina Dialogue (maiden participation by Mexico and the only high-level one from LAC in 2020).

Cooperation in the field of Space

An MoU between ISRO and the Mexican Space Agency (AEM) on 'Space Cooperation for Peaceful Purposes' was signed in October 2014. Under the MoU, a workshop on "Best Practices in the use of Space Technology for Disaster Management" was held at Mexico City in July 2016 with participation of three senior ISRO Scientists. The Workshop had dedicated sessions on effects of Hydro-meteorological phenomenon of cyclones, droughts, floods and forestry; Geological phenomenon of earthquakes, tsunamis, landslides and volcanic activities; and human generated activities. It further looked into the use of Space Technologies for Communication and geo-location for disaster management such as telecommunications, Global Navigation Satellite System, use of small satellites and best practices developed. Two Mexican officials attended courses conducted by UN centers (CSSTEAP) and IIRS. Two Mexican scientists attended the first ever UNISpace Nano satellite Assembly & Training programme sponsored and conducted by ISRO (UNNATI) from 15 January to 15 March 2019. Three officials from AEM participated in the training on "Forest Fire Monitoring through Space Technologies" at Indian Institute of Remote Sensing, Dehradun from 26-30 August 2019 under ISRO-AEM MoU for space Cooperation.

Economic and Commercial Relations

Bilateral trade between India and Mexico has shown rapid growth in recent years. In 2018-19, the bilateral trade grew at the rate of 22% to US\$ 9.42 billion from US\$ 7.71 billion in the same period in 2017-18. The two-way trade in 2018 was US\$ 10.155 billion, comprising of exports worth US\$ 5.231 billion and imports valued at US\$ 4.923 billion. The trade balance is in favour of India. Amongst the Mexico's global trade partners, India's rank rose from 10 to 9 in a span of one year. In 2018, Mexico has emerged as the largest trade partner of India in Latin America and the Caribbean region and the second in all of Americas after the USA. In 2018, India-Mexico bilateral trade has also surpassed the bilateral trade with Brazil.

India's exports comprise mainly of vehicles and auto parts, organic chemicals, aluminum products, electrical machinery & electronic equipment, products of iron and steel and gems, ceramic products and jewelry. Our imports include crude oil (75% of the imports), electrical goods and machinery, electronic equipment, vehicles and auto parts. India is also the third largest buyer of Mexico's crude oil. Potential areas for bilateral trade include software and IT, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, engineering goods, renewable energy, biotechnology, auto parts and minerals.

In order to facilitate bilateral trade, an India-Mexico Business Chamber (IMBC) was launched in May 2019. A major factor in the increasing trade between India and Mexico is the increasing number of visits to Mexico by businessmen from India. Around 300 businessmen visit Mexico every year from India and there is regular participation in large trade shows like InterModa (Fashion sector), Expo Ferreteria and CIHAC (Construction sector), and Plastimagen (plastics sector).

Investments from India in Mexico are estimated to be worth US\$ 3 billion. Most of the leading Indian companies in IT/software (such as TCS, Infosys, Wipro, NIIT, BirlaSoft, HCL, Aptech, Hexaware, and Patni.) and pharmaceutical sectors (including Hetero labs, Sun Pharma, Dr.Reddy's Laboratories, and Torrent Pharmaceuticals) have set up joint ventures in

Mexico taking advantage of its strategic location, large market and investment friendly policies. Major investments in the steel and mining sector have also been made by the Arcelor Mittal Group. In 2008, JK Tyres of India bought Mexican tyre company Tornel and in 2009 Uflex set up a greenfield packaging products project with an eye on the US market. Samvardhana Motherson Group has set up 15 plants all over northern and central Mexico employing over 23000 Mexicans. Pharma company Zydus commenced operations in 2013. In September 2014, Lupin acquired a pharma company in Mexico. In May 2014, Tech Mahindra established an office in Mexico City to provide IT & other related services and in 2018, added 2nd campus in Aguascalientes. Currently, over 180 Indian companies have presence in Mexico. Parle started its first manufacturing facility in western hemisphere in Mexico in 2018 and also became first Indian food processing company to start its business in Mexico.

Seventeen major Mexican companies have presence in India. This includes leading Mexican companies like Nematik (auto), Metalsa, Mexichem, Tremec (auto), Great Foods & Beverages, RuhrPumpen (pumps), Cinopolis and Kidzania. Mexican IT company Softtek became the first Latin American company to have a presence in India as service provider. Recently Bimbo Group made investment acquiring a major stake in Harvest Gold brand. Cinopolis has opened over 350 screens all over India penetrating into tier 2 cities as well. In total, the investment is estimated to be around US\$ 1 billion.

The flagship conclave of the Ministry – India Latin America and Caribbean (LAC) Conclave was held for the first time outside India on 28-29 November, 2016. It was inaugurated by General (Retd.) V.K. Singh, Minister of State (MOS) for External Affairs in Guadalajara, Mexico. Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organized the event, in partnership with the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (UN ECLAC) and the Government of Jalisco, Mexico. The conclave, which included plenary session, business-to-business meetings, networking lunches, panel discussions and breakout sessions saw the participation of over three hundred delegates from various Latin American Countries as well as a large number of Indian delegates.

There exists a Bilateral High Level Group (BHLG) co-chaired by the Commerce Secretary and his Mexican counterpart which looks into ways to promote trade and investments with a focus on areas such as tourism, chemicals, infrastructure, pharmaceuticals, textiles and bio-fuels through relevant working groups. The 4th meeting of the BHLG was held in Mexico City in July 2016, during which the two countries decided to sign MOUs for investment promotion and for SMEs in the near future. India and Mexico signed an Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters on 15 October 2012. In July 2013, Mexico supported India's proposal at the Codex Alimentarius Commission to create a Committee on Spices and Culinary Herbs.

Science and Technology

An umbrella bilateral agreement for cooperation in the field of science and technology (S&T) was signed in 1975 and activities are carried out through three-yearly programmes of cooperation under its framework. There are a number of ongoing projects in areas of mutual interest like seismology, material science, agricultural waste management, atmospheric sciences and advanced applied physics. A joint workshop in biotechnology was held in Pune in October 2013 and on earthquakes in Mexico City in April 2015. More joint workshops are being planned in areas like solar energy, water, health, seismology and nanotechnology. During the 6th Meeting of Indo-Mexican Joint Committee on S&T held in Mexico City in July 2016, a

programme on cooperation for the period 2017-2019 was signed and the two sides reviewed the ongoing bilateral cooperation and setup a road map for future cooperation between National Council of Science and Technology (CONACYT) and Department of Science and Technology (DST). This PoC was renewed with a new PoC 2020-22 in Dec. 2019.

Traditional Medicines System

Bilateral cooperation has been initiated in the area of traditional medicine with the signing of a letter of intent for cooperation on 15 October 2012 between GOI's Department of AYUSH and Mexico's Ministry of Health. India's Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy and the National School of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ENMH) at Mexico's National Polytechnic Institute (IPN) signed a letter of intent on 17 October 2012 to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding to establish an academic chair in homoeopathy at ENMH, to be manned by a professor from India. The matter is pending with the Mexican side.

Education and Technical Cooperation

ITEC program was extended to Mexico in 1991 and currently 35 training slots are available to Mexican participants annually. Under the bilateral academic exchange programme, 4 scholarships are offered to Mexican students every year while Mexico provides up to 6 scholarships annually to Indian students for pursuing various undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes. A slot is also offered to Mexican diplomats for training at the Foreign Service Institute of the Ministry of External Affairs once in two years.

People-to-People Contacts and Cultural Relations

Among common Mexicans, there is widespread awareness and strong interest in and regard for India's culture, social values and its pluralistic democracy. Legend has it that an Indian princess 'Meera' landed in Mexico in the 17th century and is well-known here as 'La China Poblana'. There is great admiration for Mahatma Gandhi, Tagore, and Mother Teresa. India's achievements in the economic, educational, scientific & technological fields, especially in recent years, are greatly admired. Statues and busts of Mahatma Gandhi adorn major Mexican cities like Mexico City, Guadalajara, Acapulco, Guanajuato, Cancun and Matehuala San Luis Potosi and roads and several schools are also named after him. The writings of Nobel-laureate and Indophile Octavio Paz, who was Mexican Ambassador to India in the sixties, on his long experiences in India have had a profound impact in Mexico.

An agreement on cultural cooperation has been in existence since 1975 and cooperation activities are carried out through four-yearly 'Programmes of Cultural Cooperation' under the framework of this agreement. ICCR offers four scholarships to Mexican nationals every year. Leading Mexican university 'Colegio de Mexico' and the 'National Autonomous University of Mexico' have important centres of Indian studies. An Octavio Paz Chair of Indian Studies manned by a professor deputed by ICCR was established at Colegio de Mexico in July 2010. Due to financial crunch in ICCR and some administrative difficulties in the Mexican University, the Chair has since been discontinued. In October 2018, India was the Guest of Honour country at the 46th Cervantino International Festival which is the largest cultural festival in the entire Hispanic world. India is the first Asian nation to be nominated as the Guest of Honour country at Guadalajara International Book Fair (FIL 2019) to be held in November-December of 2019.

The Gurudev Tagore Indian Cultural Centre has been functioning in Mexico since October 2010. There are regular classes for Yoga, Indian Classical and Bollywood dances,

Sitar, Tabla, Hindi, Sanskrit and Indian Cooking Classes at the Centre. During the last 9 years, 14 Mexican students have availed the ICCR scholarships.

Indian Community

The Indian community (PIOs/NRIs) in Mexico is small, numbering around 10,000 with most of them residing in Mexico City, and the rest spread in Guadalajara, Monterrey, Cuernavaca, Queretaro, etc. They comprise mainly of IT professionals working for TCS, Infosys and WIPRO, but also includes executives of Indian and international companies, academics and some businessmen mostly in textile and garment business. In 2016, an 'Indian Association of Mexico (IAM)' has been registered locally, which commands good membership and support of the community. Indian cuisine is regarded highly and is popular and there are a few Indian restaurants in Mexico City. Mexico City also has a Sikh Gurudwara, as well as an ISKCON temple.

Consular

Diplomatic and Official passport holders of India and Mexico have been exempted from visa requirements for entry. Persons (of any nationality) holding valid visa of the USA, Canada or Schengen Area also do not require visa to enter Mexico for tourism, transit and business purposes. Mexico is included in the list of countries whose citizens are eligible for the online Electronic Tourist Visa (eTV). An Extradition Treaty and an Agreement on Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty on Criminal Matters were signed during the September 2007 visit of President Calderon.

The number of Mexicans going to India is on the increase, for both business and tourism purposes. The number of visas issued annually by the Embassy in Mexico increased between 2006 and 2014 by over 60% to reach 8900. In 2017, the Embassy issued around 1070 visas in addition to around 14,282 visas obtained by the Mexican nationals online. Close to 65,000 Indian tourists are estimated to have visited Mexico in 2018, including from the US and Europe.

Multilateral

India and Mexico have cooperated closely in the multilateral fora, taking forward the agenda of South-South cooperation.

Bilateral Trade Mexico 2014-15 to 2018-19

(USD in Millions)

	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Export	2,861.55	2,865.13	3,460.98	3,782.79	3,841.57
Import	3,393.15	2,283.19	2,944.52	3,930.26	5,577.03
Total Trade	6,254.70	5,148.32	6,405.50	7,713.05	9,418.59

[Source: Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and Export Import Data Bank, Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.]